**Kent Supported Homes Workforce Plan**

**Name of author: Mark Weinel**

**Name of Senior Manager Approving:   
Caroline Smith**

**Date: September 2023**

**Review: March 2024**

A close-up of several people

Description automatically generated

# Contents

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Page** |
| [Overview](#_Overview) | 4 |
| 1. [Staffing Requirement (Roles)](#_Staffing_Requirement_(Roles):) | 4 |
| [Structure Chart](#_Structure_Chart) | 7 |
| 1. [Marketing and Recruitment](#_Marketing_and_Recruitment) | 7 |
| [Host Recruitment and Assessment](#_Host_Recruitment_and) | 7 |
| [Initial Enquiries Team](#_Initial_Enquiries_Team) | 7 |
| [Timescales](#_Timescales) | 7 |
| [Process of Assessment](#_Process_of_Assessment) | 8 |
| [Initial visit](#_Initial_Visit) | 8 |
| [Stage 1](#_Stage_1) | 8 |
| [DBS Check](#_DBS_Check) | 8 |
| [Other Checks](#_Other_Checks) | 8 |
| [References](#_References) | 9 |
| [DBS Checks](#_DBS_Checks) | 10 |
| [Preparation of Applicants](#_Preparation_of_Applicants) | 10 |
| [Assessment Visits](#_Assessment_Visits) | 10 |
| [Approval Process](#_Approval_Process) | 11 |
| [Host Agreement (Terms and Conditions)](#_Host_Agreement_(Terms) | 11 |
| [Refer a Friend Scheme](#_Refer_a_Friend) | 11 |
| [Information Open Events](#_Information_Open_Events) | 12 |
| [Conditions for Approval as a Host](#_Conditions_for_Approval) | 12 |
| [Relationships](#_Relationships) | 12 |
| [Age](#_Age) | 12 |
| [Accommodation](#_Accommodation) | 12 |
| [Communication](#_Communication) | 12 |
| [Pets](#_Pets) | 13 |
| [Weapons](#_Weapons) | 13 |
| [Financial Security](#_Financial_security) | 13 |
| [Working Hosts](#_Working_Hosts) | 13 |
| [Employment Tax](#_Employment_Tax) | 13 |
| [Applicants’ Children](#_Applicants'_Children) | 14 |
| [Health](#_Health) | 14 |
| [Medication and Drugs](#_Medication_and_Drugs) | 14 |
| [Alcohol](#_Alcohol) | 14 |
| [Relative and Friend/Connected Persons Application](#_Relative_and_Friend/Connected) | 15 |
| [Recruitment of Connected Person Hosts Outside Kent](#_Recruitment_of_Connected) | 16 |
| [Relief Host Approval Process](#_Relief_Host_Approval) | 16 |
| [Connected Persons/Specific Host (single arrangements with a known adult) Process](#_Connected_Persons/Specific_Host) | 16 |
| [Dual Registration – Foster Carer and KSH Hosts](#_Dual_Registration_–) | 16 |
| [KCC Foster Carers Transferring to KSH (No Longer Wish to be a Foster Carer)](#_KCC_Foster_Carers) | 17 |
| [IFA Foster Carers deregistering from their IFA](#_Independent_Fostering_Agency) | 17 |
| [Social Services Employees who wish to Host](#_Social_Services_Employees) | 17 |
| [Assessing and Quality Assurance of Host Properties](#_Assessing_and_Quality) | 18 |
| [Host Handbook](#_Host_Handbook) | 18 |
| [KCC Substantive Staff Recruitment](#_KCC_Substantive_Staff_1) | 18 |
| [Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment](#_Diversity_and_Inclusion) | 19 |
| [Marketing](#_Marketing) | 19 |
| 1. [Skills, Training and Qualifications](#_Skills,_Training_and) | 20 |
| [The Registered Manager (Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting – Caroline Smith)](#_The_Registered_Manager) | 20 |
| [Head of Service – Mark Weinel](#_Head_of_Service) | 21 |
| [Operations Manager – Sebastian Blythe](#_Operations_Manager_–) | 21 |
| [KCC Substantive Staff Core Training (required every 3 years)](#_KCC_Substantive_Staff) | 21 |
| [18+ (Accommodation Team) Substantive Staff Training (not required for renewal)](#_18+_(Accommodation_Team)) | 22 |
| [KCC Substantive Managers Training](#_KCC_Substantive_Managers) | 23 |
| [Host Training Programme](#_Host_Training_Programme) | 24 |
| [Prospective KSH Host Training (Pre-Panel Training)](#_Prospective_KSH_Host) | 25 |
| [KSH Host Core Training](#_KSH_Host_Core) | 25 |
| [KSH Host Development Training Programme](#_KSH_Host_Development) | 26 |
| [Host Stages of Development](#_Host_Stages_of) | 27 |
| 1. [Performance Management](#_Performance_Management) | 27 |
| [KSH Hosts](#_KSH_Hosts) | 27 |
| [Six Weekly Host Supervision](#_Six_Weekly_Host) | 27 |
| [Child in Care Reviews and Pathway Planning Meetings](#_Child_in_Care) | 28 |
| [Host Annual Reviews](#_Host_Annual_Reviews) | 28 |
| [Host Performance Requiring Improvement](#_Host_Performance_Requiring) | 28 |
| [KCC Substantive Staff](#_KCC_Substantive_Staff_2) | 29 |
| [Monthly Supervision](#_Monthly_Supervisions) | 29 |
| [KSH Quarterly KPI Review Meetings](#_KSH_Quarterly_KPI) | 30 |
| [Annual Performance Reviews (TCPs)](#_Annual_Performance_Reviews) | 31 |
| [Substantive Staff Performance Requiring Improvement](#_Substantive_Staff_Performance) | 31 |
| 1. [Contingency Planning](#_Contingency_Planning) | 31 |
| [Host Contingency](#_Host_Contingency) | 31 |
| [Substantive Staff Contingency](#_Substantive_Staff_Contingency) | 32 |
| 1. [Staff Wellbeing and Support](#_Staff_Wellbeing_and) | 32 |
| 1. [Budget and Resources](#_Budget_and_Resources) | 33 |
| 1. [Communication and Engagement](#_Communication_and_Engagement) | 33 |
| 1. [Review and Update](#_Review_and_Update) | 34 |
| [Appendix A: Kent Supported Homes Structure Chart](#_Appendix_A_–) | 35 |

# Overview

As the registered provider, Kent County Council (KCC) is responsible for ensuring that recruitment practices are in place that ensure staff are fit to work with young people and that they have the relevant skills, qualifications and recent experience to meet the needs of young people. This includes Hosts, Accommodation Officers and Managers. The term ‘staff’ used in relevant documentation will include all aforementioned parties.

Kent County Council will ensure that staff work together to meet the needs of the young people within the Kent Supported Homes (KSH) provision. Where there are gaps in staff training, Kent County Council will arrange for any essential training to be satisfactorily completed in a timely manner. Kent County Council will ensure that staff understand their roles and specific responsibilities in relation to the support provided to young people in the service and how this contributes to the service delivering against the Kent Supported Homes Statement of Purpose. Staff will understand where they sit in the organisational structure and what arrangements are in place to support their training and professional development.

# Staffing Requirement (Roles):

The Kent Supported Homes provision is currently made up of the following staffing roles:

* 1. **Nominated Individual(Assistant Director** **of Corporate Parenting) –**[They are responsible for meeting the relevant regulations and registration conditions](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=1136a8795335a389JmltdHM9MTcxODc1NTIwMCZpZ3VpZD0yZjZkNzZmZC1iZWJkLTY3MjQtMTQ4OS02MjllYmYwNjY2NGMmaW5zaWQ9NTc1Mg&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=2f6d76fd-bebd-6724-1489-629ebf06664c&psq=ofsted+nominated+individual&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly91bHRyYWhlYWx0aGNhcmUuY28udWsvd2hhdC1pcy1hLW5vbWluYXRlZC1pbmRpdmlkdWFsLw&ntb=1) as set by Ofsted and are the immediate line manager of the Registered Service Manager.
  2. **18+ Head of Service/ Registered Service Manager –** Holds overall operational safeguarding decision-making responsibility within Kent Supported Homes, final decision panel outcomes in respect of reapproval of Hosts (Connected to Mainstream or agreeing increases to capacity to support by Hosts) and acts as liaison between 18+ Accommodation Team Manager and Nominated Individual Nominated Individual. Day to day operational decisions are delegated to the 18+ Accommodation Team Manager.
  3. **18+ Accommodation Team Manager** – Overseeing and co-ordinating the work of the Accommodation Officer and Accommodation Finance Officer, as well as the day-to-day operations of KSH.
  4. **Training Co-Ordinator** – Co-ordinating the planning, development, and availability of training for Hosts.
  5. **Recruitment Co-ordinator –** Co-ordinating the recruitment activities for the KSH provision, including outreach events, advertising and marketing.
  6. **Accommodation Finance Officer** – responsible for inputting and monitoring of compliance data and finance for the KSH service.
  7. **Assessment Officers –** Undertaking assessments of prospective new or returning Hosts and presenting the outcomes of said assessments, with recommendation, to the Fostering Panel for their consideration.
  8. **Accommodation Officers** – Providing advice, guidance and supervision to Hosts, excluding those providing Staying Put arrangements who are current Kent County Council Foster Carers.
  9. **KSH Hosts** – Overseeing the direct support of young people and their progression towards independence within their home setting.

Kent Supported Homes is an in-house supported lodgings service. Day-to-day operations are overseen by the Operations Manager (Accommodation Team Manager, reporting to the 18+ Head of Service) who retains strategic oversight and in turn reports ultimately to the Registered Service Manager (Assistant Director).

Young person support – Hosts provide direct support to the young people in their homes and report this to their respective allocated Accommodation Officers, who provide them with 6 weekly supervisions to review and support in delivering this support, as well as checking on the progress and wellbeing of the young people and the Hosts.

In respect of the specific needs of each young person, these are met by the Host as above, but remain the responsibility of the Personal Advisors (for those aged 18+) or Social Workers (16 & 17-year-olds).

Performance – Challenges or successes can be raised by the Accommodation Officers to the Operations Manager or other supporting professionals at any time and can be discussed in the individual supervisions of the Accommodation Officers, with the Operations Manager, at monthly individual supervision for said Accommodation Officers.

All KCC staff, including managers, are provided with monthly supervision to ensure clear lines of accountability and effective management in addition to the performance management processes. These processes include but are not limited to, annual performance reviews (Total Contribution Pay, or TCP) and Quarterly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) meetings, wherein the key performance indicators are discussed to ensure that the service remains clear on its desired outcomes and how best to work towards or continue to deliver these. These service KPIs are monitored using a combination of manual data collection and Power BI; an electronic system which draws data from the main reporting system used by KCC’s service, known as ‘Liberi’. Individual performance management processes, discussed in supervision alongside HR resources can also be utilised, should this be required.

Compliance of the Host’s individual addresses to the requirements of the service are discussed during their individual supervisions, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, reporting, training and locations-based requirements, such as Gas Safety. These are supported by the work of the Accommodation Finance Officer, who supports Accommodation Officers to remain aware of the requirements for Hosts to take actions in these regards.

Each approved Host will need to have an in-date Gas Safety Certificate and a Fire Safety Plan.

Continuity of support for young people within the service is ensured via various basic processes.

Respite – is available to Hosts and young people upon request. Should the Host be taking their annual 14 days of paid respite, they will inform their Accommodation Officer of this, and the Accommodation Officer will work to identify another Host with whom the young person can stay for this period. Similarly, if the young person feels that for whatever reason, they too need a period away from their current Host, they can request via their Personal Advisor (PA) or Social Worker for this to be arranged, or via their Accommodation Officer as previously stated.

Relief Hosts – some Hosts have identified Relief Hosts, who are able to stay in their properties, should the main Hosts have to leave for any extended period. These Hosts fulfil the same role as the main Hosts and ensure that where they are available, young people are not disrupted by any undesired moves between addresses. These individuals are often friends or family of the main Host, who have themselves been vetted via usual processes, including DBS checks and who have completed the usual pre-panel training for mainstream Hosts.

Leave – Where KCC substantive staff (Accommodation Officers) are affected by sickness leave absence or other availability issues, as is the case for the wider KCC 18+ staff group, it is the expectation that they utilise others in their support network where feasible, such as Social Workers, PAs or other Local Authority employees who form part of their professional support network. For periods where there is planned staff leave, the Accommodation Officers will notify their Hosts in advance and ensure that they have contact details for the other Accommodation Officers within Kent Supported Homes, thereby ensuring that if they are unable to contact other professionals, they still have a contact within the Kent Supported Homes service for general enquiries, advice and guidance. The Operations Manager and Accommodation Finance Officer will also remain prepared to receive contact in such instances and their contact information is widely available to the Hosts.

Duty Teams – operate within each of the Children’s Service (Child in Care) Teams, as well as the 18+ Care Leavers service, which Hosts can benefit from should they require this.

Out of Hours – Support remains available to Hosts at all times outside of typical working hours to ensure that Hosts remain able to receive support during these times.

Staffing Levels – will be continuously monitored each month to ensure that Hosts remain well supported. Hosting ‘areas’ are currently assigned to specific Accommodation Officers, and each remains responsible for supporting and supervising the Hosts within their areas. These areas remain flexible and subject to change as number of registered Hosts can fluctuate. This approach ensures that Accommodation Officers have the time resource to support the allocated Hosts. As numbers of registered Hosts grow, as is the desire of the service, management will remain responsive and should there be identified need to increase the size of the staff base to provide the required support to the Hosts, this will be addressed via the usual employment processes of KCC recruitment practices, as the service remains focussed on ensuring the quality of the support it provides to its Hosts.

## Structure Chart

See [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A_–).

# Marketing and Recruitment

## Host Recruitment and Assessment

### Initial Enquiries Team

Dedicated advisers will offer a gateway into the service and provide the following functions:

* Dedicated telephone line/answerphone so all enquires are routed direct to the advisers.
* Consistent responses to enquiries.
* Initial screening to see whether those enquiring meet minimum criteria for acceptance for assessment.
* Collate and send out packs and application forms.
* Receive and acknowledge applications.
* Input details of enquiry/application into database.
* Track application during assessment process and provide ongoing link/liaison.
* Collection of data in relation to applications and timescales.

### Timescales

* Initial enquiries will be responded to within one working day.
* Information packs emailed within one working day.
* Initial home visit will take place within ten working days following receipt of application.
* The Service aims to assess new applicants within four months.

## Process of Assessment

### Initial Visit

Once an application has been accepted a KSH Assessment Officer will undertake an initial home visit within 10 working days including recording and management oversight. This visit will take place at the home of the prospective applicant. The assessment process and the criteria for approval will be clearly explained to applicants at the initial visit.

### Stage 1

### DBS Check

These will be instigated following the initial visit. Formal checks in the form of Enhanced Disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service must be undertaken for all applicants and members of their household aged 16 and over unless they are young people being provided support by Kent Count Council Specialist Children’s Services.

Previous offending behaviour will be scrutinised, and applications are unlikely to be progressed if any member of the household has been cautioned for, or convicted of:

* Offences against children
* Driving disqualification within the last 5 years
* Any offence involving harm to another in the last 10 years.

### Other Checks

Checks will also be undertaken within KCC’s own information systems (Mosaic – Adult Social Care / Liberi – Children’s Social Care / Early Help Module – Early Help / Core+ – Youth Justice and Local Authority Designated Officer) and those of other Local Authorities where the prospective Host has lived in the previous 10 years. If any of the applicant's own children or any other child they have cared for have ever been subject to a Child Protection Plan, legal proceedings or compulsorily removed from their care this may preclude the application from proceeding.

All applicants will be required to provide the following information:

* Proof of identity including a recent photograph e.g., driving licence, passport or birth certificate.
* A single employment (current or last) reference to ascertain their character in regard to meeting the requirements of the role of Host.
* Check with the prospective Host to ensure that they are using their property legally and in accordance with any tenancy and rights to sublet to lodgers.
* A social media check will be undertaken to include Facebook and other social media sites and general internet searches.

### References

A minimum of three of the personal referees will be interviewed by the Fostering Social Worker. Previous partners will also be spoken to where shared parenting of birth children has taken place previously, as part of the assessment process, unless this is assessed by the Assessment Officer with agreement from their Team Manager as being inappropriate.

Adult birth children will be spoken with to understand their thoughts on their experiences of parenting and understanding of their own progression towards independence.

The above is in place to fully vet all applicants (and any other over 16 years old living in the proposed property) for suitability of working with children and young people including undertaking DBS checks and securing a minimum of two written references from suitable referees, following a safe recruitment procedure. Each application will be considered on its merits with the welfare of young people being paramount.

Interviews will normally be carried out in the applicant’s home, following a standard assessment format, to determine their suitability to offer support. The assessment process should be completed within 4 months from application however the service aims to complete within 6 months.

Kent Supported Homes will need to satisfy itself that applicants have good mental and physical health and vigour. Factors to be taken into account include:

* Motivation
* Mental, physical and emotional wellbeing
* Lifestyle
* Understanding of the hosting task
* Understanding of the needs of looked after children and care leavers
* Ability to manage and support a young person who may have emotional, health, developmental, behavioural and/or educational needs.
* Ability to work with a young person’s birth family if required
* Ability to meet the ethnic, cultural, religious, health and educational needs of the young person
* Suitability of accommodation
* Ability to balance the needs and lifestyles of the people in the household
* Provide a healthy and safe place to live
* Understanding and respect of confidentiality and privacy
* Keeping clear and accurate records
* Commitment to professional development to include ongoing training and attendance at support groups where possible
* Access and ability to use basic computer communication systems
* Location of property in relation to community resources as required by needs of young people.

### DBS Checks

DBS checks will be reviewed every three years. This will be the responsibility of the 18+ Accommodation Team for all KSH Hosts and KSH Connected Hosts. Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) Hosts will have DBS checks in place and progressed by their IFAs. For KCC Staying Put arrangements it will be the responsibility of the Fostering Social Worker.

If a DBS check outcome is positive, a DBS report will be completed by the allocated worker, who will make a recommendation to the Head of Service for review. This will be passed to the Assistant Director (AD) for Corporate Parenting, for a final decision and signing off. This is for both new and existing applications. Any agreement from the AD is to be achieved prior to progression to Fostering Panel for final decision on recommendation of approval.

### Preparation of Applicants

All applicants must attend pre-panel training prior to presentation to the Fostering Panel. A report of each applicant’s participation in the course in relation to the content of each session will be included in the final report to panel and will form part of the assessment process.

Feedback is also requested from the applicants from their experience of the pre-panel training in order to shape and develop this further in the future.

Mentoring can be used for applicants in order to embed learning and allow those applicants to access peer support and answer questions and queries they might have throughout the process.

### Assessment Visits

Utilised to undertake the assessment of the applicants and also to allow opportunity for the applicants to benefit from the experiences of the Assessment Officers and for said Officers to impart learning to the applicant through this process.

This can be used to shape and develop the current understanding of the applicants, identify gaps and then address the needs of the applicant in understanding other vital aspects of the Host’s role including the needs of young people, how to address these within the scope of their role and any other immediately identified and improvable support needs.

### Approval Process

The panel will provide a timely and robust approval panel for Supported Homes Hosts to ensure the quality assurance of applicants. All panels must be chaired by an independent third party. The function of Kent Fostering Panels is determined by the Kent Fostering Panels Terms of Reference. Information about how the Fostering Panel functions can be found in the [Recruitment, Assessment and Approvals of Foster Carers](https://kentchildcare.proceduresonline.com/p_ass_app_fost.html) procedure.

The Fostering Panel will hear all applications presented and will make a recommendation. The recommendation is considered by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) who will make the final decision. Applicants are required to attend the Panel.

Applicants will be informed verbally and in writing as to whether they have been approved as Hosts, and of the terms of approval once they have been presented to the Panel and ADM. If the decision is not to approve the applicant, they will be informed verbally and in writing and will be given 28 days to make written representations asking that the decision be reviewed.

The case, upon appeal, may not be returned to panel, but the Host is able to have their appeal considered by the ADM who made the original decision. Any further decision made at this stage is final and will be communicated in writing, with information as to how to register a complaint via KCC processes.

Once a Host has been approved payment details will need to be passed to the assessing worker to process accordingly.

### Host Agreement (Terms and Conditions)

Following approval an agreement between Kent Children’s Social Services and the Hosts will be drawn up in accordance with standard procedures. The agreement sets out the terms and conditions for Kent Hosts, the Kent Supported Homes Service and Kent Children’s Social Services. Accommodation Officers need to ensure that new Hosts understand fully the expectations of them under the terms and conditions of the agreement.

## Refer a Friend Scheme

Kent has a continuing need to increase and replenish its bank of Hosts and since it is recognised that the best way of finding new Hosts is through existing Foster Carers and Hosts – often relatives or friends – a payment will be made to any existing carer or Host who is providing care or support for KCC who successfully introduces new Hosts to the Service. The payment will be made when the new Host is approved.

The relevant form for payment for the referred Host is to be completed by the referring/existing Host which can be found in the [Kent Fostering Handbook online](https://handbook.kentfostering.co.uk/).

## Information Open Events

Prospective Hosts can attend the monthly virtual information events (which are published on the [KSH section of the Kent Fostering website](https://www.kentfostering.co.uk/kent-supported-homes)) to hear about the Service from existing Hosts. It is also an opportunity to ask questions.

## Conditions for Approval as a Host

Recruitment is undertaken according to the statutory requirement that the welfare of the young people is the primary consideration.

### Relationships

Applications are welcomed from couples in stable and enduring relationships and single adults.

### Age

Whilst there is no upper age limit, applicants will need to show that they have a broad experience of life to meet the demands of this challenging role. Applicants will also need to show that they are fit and healthy enough with high energy levels to provide support for the young people who are referred to the provision.

### Accommodation

The assessment of the accommodation will consider the safety of the young person and whether there is sufficient space for all the family. There will also be a location assessment, to consider the accessibility of local resources and amenities. It is expected that all young people will have their own bedroom unless the young person is also a parent of a young child, in which case they will be permitted to share their bedroom whilst it remains suitable and safe to do so. It is expected that a Host will have security of tenure and relevant permissions to sublet if in private rented accommodation. Further reference to specific standards of accommodation, as required by relevant regulations, is covered in the KSH Statement of Purpose.

### Communication

Applicants must have a personal telephone number and email address. They must have access to a computer or laptop with adequate security settings to protect confidential information and to access online information and resources such as the KSH Host Handbook, to complete and submit monthly reports and to support young people with applications or other activities.

### Pets

A pet / risk assessment of all animals will be undertaken and for any household where there are pets, agreement for an assessment to continue must be obtained by the Heads of Fostering for Staying Put Hosts, or for new Hosts or an already approved Host to continue to Host, from the responsible 18+ Head of Service.

Police advice would be sought if there are several pets or where there are issues around potential banned breeds or other concerns.

### Weapons

Applicants must keep any dangerous weapons secure and in compliance with the relevant regulations. If these are licensed firearms or other weapons in the address, the licenses will be checked to ensure these are maintained.

### Financial security

Applications from people on all levels of income including state benefits are welcome. Applicants must understand that registration as a Host is not a form of employment and therefore there are no guarantees with regard to income. Hosts are self-employed and not paid when they do not have a young person living with them.

The assessing officer will need to be satisfied that the applicants have a responsible attitude towards managing their finances.  A financial report is not required however an assessment of Host(s) standard of living will be required and will be included in the assessment report for Fostering Panel.

### Working Hosts

Hosts are permitted to work in employment for external employers or organisations, or within Kent County Council (where no conflict of interest is identified) but must be available at the required times to be able to support a young person as determined by their needs.

It is reasonably expected that a Host should be willing and able to be available to attend training and support groups and supervision with their Fostering Social Worker or Accommodation Officer. Applicants’ work must be sufficiently flexible to be able to always prioritise young people’s needs and meet all professional expectations of a Kent Supported Homes Host. Their ability to do so will be assessed. Consideration will also be given to other caring commitments and how these can be balanced with the Host role.

### Employment Tax

Hosts will be self-employed and are expected to manage their tax arrangements independently. There is [government information online about help and support if you are self-employed](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-youre-self-employed).

### Applicants' Children

Applicants will want to ensure that becoming a Host will not negatively affect the welfare of any other children living with them. KCC is committed to including and supporting the welfare of Hosts’ children in relation to other young people who come to live with them. Should any concerns be noted by the Fostering Social Worker or Accommodation Officer supporting, these will be raised with the Host and if proactive problem-solving cannot address these concerns, it may be that the Host must cease to be considered such, until such time as they are able to overcome this impact.

### Health

A medical will be undertaken for all applicants. Health factors that may impact on applicants' capacity to support young people will be considered during the assessment. These issues are important with regard to how they may impact on the applicant’s capacity to support young people. Where issues develop after assessment and through the course of continuing support, the fitness to perform the role might be reviewed.

Where there are existing health concerns such as but not limited to chronic health conditions, blood borne viruses and other conditions requiring health protection, then advice and guidance will be sought via government online resources and NHS website.

### Medication and Drugs

Where Hosts are prescribed medication for purposes of treatment, they must ensure that they are properly secured in a locked medicine cabinet and present no risk to young people. If the medication needs to be kept in the fridge, a lockable cash box is a useful way of keeping them secure. The illegal use of drugs by Hosts whilst they are responsible for the support of young people is expected to result in de-registration. Such matters will be referred to the Registered Manager and Fostering Panel. Hosts must not collude in any way with a young person in their homes in taking drugs. Hosts must advise a young person’s social worker or Personal Adviser of any concerns they have regarding their use of drugs.

### Alcohol

Hosts must ensure that if they are drinking alcohol that this does not result in the inability to be responsible for the support of the young people in their home. Hosts should be aware that many young people will associate alcohol with inappropriate behaviour or traumatic personal experiences and therefore may be fearful when they see Hosts drinking. Hosts should not encourage young people to drink or purchase alcohol under the legal age limit. Hosts should also not purchase alcohol for the young people supported. Where Hosts are aware that young people in their home may be drinking alcohol, they should advise that person’s social worker. Hosts must be aware that whilst they are responsible for the support of other people’s children, they must take account of their own alcohol consumption. Drinking alcohol with the young people is unacceptable on the grounds of the requirements for the Host to remain able and in a professional role to support and safeguard the needs of the young person.

## Relative and Friend/Connected Persons Applicants

Relative/friend Hosts will be required to meet the same rigorous standards as mainstream applicants although there is some discretion within the assessment for these Hosts where it is in the interest of the young person whom they wish to support. Relatives and friends will be treated with respect, along with an acknowledgement of the difficulties which have led to the young person becoming looked after.

Where a 16- or 17-year-old young person in care or 18 – 21-year-old Care Leaver has family, friend/s or other person connected with them available to provide accommodation and support, arrangements to assess the identified adult/s, whether the young person is already living with them or it is planned they will live with them, must be agreed by the Service Manager and Assistant Area Director responsible for the young person.

For an initial consultation about the viability of the arrangement the young person’s Social Worker / Personal Advisor can contact the Fostering & KSH Development Team at [fosteringkshdevelopment@kent.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringkshdevelopment@kent.gov.uk) where an early joint visit with a KSH Assessing Officer can be arranged if this would be helpful and where possible.

The KSH Connected Viability Report must be completed by the young person’s Social Worker / Personal Advisor and e-mailed to [fosteringkshdevelopment@kent.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringkshdevelopment@kent.gov.uk) to request a full KSH Connected assessment.  A Police National Computer (PNC) check of all household members over 16 must have been completed and the results included.

On receipt of the KSH Connected Viability Report the full assessment will be allocated to a KSH Assessing Officer and a date at Fostering Panel booked.  The young person’s Social Worker/Personal Advisor and the connected Hosts are expected to attend with the KSH Assessing Officer to answer any questions panel may have.

For young people aged 16 and 17 their Social Worker must complete the Liberi Placement Plan request and for 18 – 21-year-old Care Leavers the Personal Advisor must complete the Liberi 18+ Accommodation Request.  It must be clearly stated that the young person is already living with or it is planned for them to live with a connected KSH Host who is under assessment, so Total Placement Service (TPS) do not undertake a placement search.  The placement plan / 18+ Accommodation Request will be reassigned by TPS to the 18+ Care Leavers Accommodation Team.

The young person’s Social Worker / Personal Advisor must update the young person’s Care Plan / Pathway Plan to reflect that the young person is living with / or will be living with the KSH Connected Host/s.

 A valid Gas Safety Certificate must also be in place.

The timescale for assessments to be completed and presented to Fostering Panel is four months from receipt of the Viability Report wherever possible.

Relative and friend Hosts may undertake the training that is offered to all Hosts. This includes the pre-panel training along with the other mandatory modules for Mainstream Hosts, over time.

## Recruitment of Connected Person Hosts Outside Kent

Kent Supported Homes will undertake to recruit, assess and supervise Hosts in other parts of the country where it is clearly in the young person's best interest to be placed with relatives or friends and away from their home community. The same process and timescales as for in-county will be followed and the same standards applied re: resources and training.

## Relief Host Approval Process

Where identified, these Relief Hosts will be assessed during the assessment process of the main Host.

The 18+ Accommodation Manager will sign off Relief Host arrangements for all Hosts supported by the 18+ Accommodation Team. KCC Staying Put Foster Carers will follow the Relief Carer arrangements for Foster Carers.

Please note that young people can also stay at the relief Host’s accommodation if approved.

Deregistration of Relief Hosts will be considered and overseen by the 18+ Accommodation Team Manager.

## Connected Persons/Specific Host (Single Arrangements with a Known Adult) Process.

Foster Care Connected Persons – if the connected carer does not have any other child under 18 years old then a ‘change of approval’ report will need to be presented to panel to deregister as Foster Carers and register as KSH connected hosts.

## Dual Registration – Foster Carer and KSH Hosts

For Foster Carers who also wish to become KSH hosts for young people not already in their care, a full assessment will be completed and presented to panel. There will need to be a joined-up approach to ensure the Foster Carer/Host is not approved for too many young people and that there is a balance between the two roles. This will be on a case-by-case basis and will also be dependent on the type of accommodation offered e.g. available bedroom space within the household and the annex or other available accommodation. Please note that the Fostering Social Worker will only support In-House Staying Put arrangements and for carers with a dual approval. They will have an Accommodation Officer allocated to oversee the Kent Supported Homes arrangement.

## KCC Foster Carers transferring to KSH (No Longer Wish to Be a Foster Carer)

If a Foster Carer wishes to deregister from KCC Fostering and has a Staying Put arrangement, then their approval will need to be terminated when presenting the report to the Fostering Panel for them to become a Host. The carers would then transfer to the 18+ Care Leavers Accommodation Team, as a KSH Host, for their support of the existing arrangement.

## Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) Foster Carers deregistering from their IFA.

Any IFA Foster Carers who deregister from their IFA as a Foster Carer will need to go through the panel process to become a KSH Host.

## Social Services Employees who wish to Host

When considering an application to Host, the worker needs to consider the potential conflict of Interest and discuss it with their line manager.

If employed within the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) directorate, consideration of the professional role and any potential conflict of interest or matching issues must be undertaken and assessed.

During the assessment process, the assessing worker should pay particular attention to any conflict of interest between work and Hosting. They should seek the views of the applicant’s line manager to ensure that areas of potential conflict have been fully discussed. Areas could include access to information, demands of their job, or conflict for the person as either a worker or Host if allegations are made against them.

The type of young person, age and number of children are considered during assessments, but special attention needs to be given to this to ensure that work and Hosting are compatible.

## Assessing and Quality Assurance of Host Properties

An assessment of the applicant’s accommodation and its suitability will be made prior to the potential Host going to Panel. This could also include training flats, an annex or any other properties owned by the Host for the young person to be accommodated, with support being provided by the Host, which meets the required Building, Fire and Health & Safety Regulations.

The health and safety standards are reviewed annually within the Host’s annual review to ensure that the conditions and safety of the property have not decreased or to ensure that where this has happened, effective plans are put into place for expedient remedy.

The property should be expected to be in a reasonable state of repair, be of a sufficient scale to accommodate young people comfortably and undertake effective living and support arrangements, in a welcoming and ‘homely’ environment.

## Host Handbook

All applicants who are successful in registering for the service and who are eligible to act as Hosts for Kent’s young people are provided with a Host Handbook, which outlines their role, their rights and responsibilities as well as providing guidance in key areas of their work.

## KCC Substantive Staff Recruitment

All recruitment is embedded within KCC recruitment processes and benefits from relevant policy and legislation re: employment law.

KCC’s recruitment processes are followed for substantive Accommodation Team staff and the Operations Manager (the recruiting manager) will have completed the required On line recruitment training packages available through Delta to ensure this is done effectively and fairly in each case. Guidance and policy are available to the recruiting manager at any time, via the KCC online resource ‘KNet’.

Management of applications is conducted by the KCC 18+ Business Support Team and applications are shared with and will be considered for shortlisting by the recruiting manager and at least one other individual within the 18+ Care Leaver Service whenever possible.

Once applicants have been identified as suitable for interview, they will be interviewed by a panel consisting of the recruiting manager, another KCC employee and whenever possible, a KCC young person (service user) or care-experienced apprentice. This ensures that the voice of the young people within Kent, is heard within the process of employment of staff who will be overseeing the delivery of support for other care-experienced young people.

All staff have access to a job description at the point of application for the role and subsequently at the point of becoming employed as per KCC’s employment processes.

All substantive KCC staff undergo an induction into the service. Each is subject to a period of 6 months’ probation at the start of their employment with KCC and has annual performance reviews to ensure that performance does not decrease, or that where it is seen to have done so, it can be addressed to affect positive change via the relevant management or HR processes.

This induction includes having contact with key persons throughout the service to understand their roles and completing relevant training as described within this document.

## Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment

KCC and Kent Supported Homes remain determined to ensure that the recruitment and all other processes used within services delivered promote the diversity and inclusion of all people, wherever possible and safe.

All processes are applied in accordance with KCC’s Equality and Diversity Policy and philosophy, and any issues identified in respect of possible discrimination will be managed in this way also.

It is the aim of the service to encourage both inclusivity and cultural sharing opportunities between Hosts and young people they support, as well as doing our best through marketing and recruitment to identify a variety of Host homes to young people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

## Marketing

The service will undertake marketing and promotional activities to ensure KCC can respond flexibly to potentially significant fluctuations in demand for Host numbers over time and that will focus on attracting new Hosts. The new Hosts will have the core skills and competencies to enable them to support, nurture and enable young people from a wide variety of backgrounds and that have faced significant difficulties in their lives.

Kent Supported Homes will further develop a contemporary approach to marketing, including a combination of digital, social media and offline strategies, whilst considering the demographics of the varying target audience.

The service will adopt a multifaceted approach to its recruitment, through consistent and aligned messaging and campaigns, with a focus on engaging digitally via online platforms and social media channels.

Future content will ensure our audience understands, values and recognises how our Hosts transform the lives of young people who are older children in care or care leavers within our local community, by creating and landing compelling and authentic content that drives prospective Hosts to apply.

Kent Supported Homes will develop a narrative that will be the core of all activity and will define the service’s spirit, values, and history. “Story telling” will bring recruitment marketing to life and look to create deeper, emotional, and more meaningful connections with our audiences and prospective Hosts. Telling our service’s story is a critical part of building Kent Supported Homes Service as a “brand.”

Content will depict real life examples through our Hosts, older children in care, care leavers and Kent Children’s Services to communicate authentically.

Our budget for marketing is carefully planned and projected in advance with senior management oversight to address particular areas where additional resources might be required in terms of recruiting Hosts to deliver effective service to the cohort of young people who may require support in the future.

# Skills, Training and Qualifications

Training and continuing professional development remain central to the philosophy of the Kent Supported Homes service and will be subject to regular review and discussion.

Each person within the service will have the opportunity to develop their skills and practice as they wish or as is identified as being required by them, supporting staff (in respect of the Host / Accommodation Officer relationship) or by management within the service.

Hosts will have discussions about training opportunities, requirements and their personal development in their regular supervisions and at the point of annual review.

## The Registered Manager (Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting – Caroline Smith)

Caroline Smith is KCC’s current AD for Corporate Parenting and meets all requirements for the registered manager of an Ofsted registered supported lodgings provision. Caroline is a degree-level qualified and registered Social Worker with Social Work England. Caroline is also the Registered Manager of the KCC Fostering Service and has direct oversight of the service and its delivery of care and support as is required by Ofsted. In this regard, Caroline has evidenced her ability and experience in delivering outcomes as per this role.

Caroline meets all of the registration requirements as set out in Regulations 11, 12, 13 and 14 of The Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023.

## Head of Service – Mark Weinel

Mark Weinel is the current joint Head of Service for KCC 18+ Service and direct manager of the 18+ Accommodation Team Manager (Kent Supported Homes Operations Manager).

Mark Weinel is a degree-level qualified and registered Social Worker with many years of experience in Specialist Childrens Services within Kent.

Mark reports directly to Caroline Smith (above) and is the safeguarding and strategic lead for Kent Supported Homes.

## Operations Manager – Sebastian Blythe

Sebastian Blythe is the current Operations Manager for Kent Supported Homes overseeing the delivery of support to the Hosts, by the substantive KSH Accommodation Officers.

Sebastian also oversees the management of compliance of the Hosts, supported in this by the Accommodation Finance Officer, who manages the data and reporting involved in this. Sebastian has a degree in Applied Criminology and has worked in the areas of behaviour reform, social care, and justice for over ten years. He has been in his current post as 18+ Accommodation Team Manager since December 2020.

## KCC Substantive Staff Core Training (Required Every 3 Years)

All substantive staff have access to an in-house online training resource, [Delta](https://www.delta-learning.com/login/index.php), through which they can access many online or in-person training opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities across all parts of the services delivered or supported by Kent County Council. Staff will also have access to other online resources for professionals across Kent, including an online CPD resource [The Education People](https://www.theeducationpeople.org/) which provides bespoke training offers designed by KCC’s Training Coordinator in conjunction with expert facilitators, and the [Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership site](https://www.kscmp.org.uk/) which provides training opportunities committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children who live in Kent and Medway.

Each substantive staff member within the Accommodation Team overseeing the operations of KSH will have the same basic core training as a minimum requirement. These form part of the general training and induction of KCC staff and are repeated once every two years to ensure that knowledge in these areas is maintained and updated with any new learning as might be required. These modules are below:

* Staff Induction
  + An introduction to the Council's structure, strategic direction, values, policies & procedures and includes an overview of what employees can expect from KCC as their employer alongside our own expectations of them.
* GDPR (Data Protection Essentials)
  + Data protection basics, and how these are governed by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
  + Day to day data protection
  + What to do if there is a security incident
  + Collecting personal and sensitive information
  + Seeking consent
  + Sharing personal information
  + Privacy by design
  + Working with commissioned services and other external bodies
* Introduction to Information Governance
  + A comprehensive guide to why information is so important, the risks to its safety, and what can be done to protect it.
  + Outlining the importance of protecting information and the measures staff should take both inside and outside of the workplace.
  + Sharing and sending information
  + The roles and responsibilities of staff in the management of information
* PREVENT: Safeguarding People from Extremism and Terrorism
  + Understanding CONTEST as the government's counter terrorism strategy
  + Understanding the 4 strands of CONTEST and that Prevent is one of these strands.
  + Identify how Channel sits within Prevent, together with Channel’s purpose and process.
  + Identifying factors that can make people vulnerable to radicalisation.

## 18+ (Accommodation Team) Substantive Staff Training (not required for renewal)

* Introduction to Equality & Diversity (Online)
  + An overview of why equality is important in the workplace
  + Challenging common assumptions
  + Dissecting the way people react to situations within the workplace.
* Mental Health Awareness (Online)
  + An understanding of what mental health is
  + Basic knowledge of common mental health issues
  + What good mental health means
  + Some available therapies and support
  + Useful resources.
* Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (Online)
  + Definition of child sexual exploitation
  + Spotting signs of child sexual exploitation
  + Definition of grooming?
  + Assessing risk
  + Suspecting a child is being sexually exploited
  + Best practice in working with CSE.
* Domestic Abuse (DA) (Online)
  + Definition of Domestic Abuse
  + How to recognise Domestic Abuse
  + How to report Domestic Abuse
* Adult Safeguarding Awareness (Online)
  + An understanding of how Adult Safeguarding works in Kent
  + Identifying abuse and neglect in adults
  + The two-stage function test of capacity
  + Case conference
  + Providing post abuse support
  + Dignity and quality in care
  + Human rights and the use of restraint
  + Good communication skills and how to record and store evidence.
* Safeguarding Children (Online)
  + Introduction to child protection
  + Signs and types of abuse
  + Other forms of abuse
  + Taking action
  + Understanding how professionals assess and respond.

## KCC Substantive Managers Training

All managers within KCC and thus, Kent Supported Homes have the same opportunities for training and development as any other substantive staff, with the same consideration within supervision and access to the same resources.

This training applies to all staff in management roles within KCC including the following roles: Registered Service Manager (Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting); 18+ Head of Service; 18+ Accommodation Team Manager; Fostering and Supported Homes Development Team Manager and all Fostering Managers.

* Managing in KCC
  + There is a range of blended supporting development content aligned to each of the six modules to support development and evidence submission.
  + Managing in KCC – understanding political environment, organisational context, expectations of managers in Kent.
  + Empowering others – how to set clear goals, manage performance through outcomes, build trust and develop agility and capability.
  + Managing culture & change – how to inspire others and successfully embed behaviour change, digitalisation, and process improvement.
  + Developing wellbeing – how to manage and support physical, mental, and social wellbeing of staff – self and others.
  + Building resilience – how to manage uncertainty. Build resilience – at a personal, team and service level.
  + Serving customers & communities – how to put the needs of residents, communities, and businesses at the heart of decision making.

## Host Training Programme

Trainingis a continual process, and all Kent Supported Homes Hosts will be offered training to update their skills on a regular basis following approval. Hosts are expected to engage with appropriate training, mandatory and other courses that are offered, as part of their role.

Kent Supported Homes provide a training pathway, including mandatory learning and access to additional online training that will be available to Hosts. Hosts will need to complete training as identified within the timescales and demonstrate ongoing learning annually.

In circumstances where Hosts have not completed the required training following their annual review, consideration will be given to presenting this to an 18+ Senior Manager with a recommendation on whether approval as a Host can continue.

As part of their induction, and prior to accommodating any young people, Hosts are required to be trained to understand and take action relating to the Kent and Medway Children’s and Adults Safeguarding Policies and Procedures to support young people safely and safeguard their welfare.

Hosts will be presented with certificates for the training courses they have attended. The Kent Fostering Service or the 18+ Accommodation Team will keep a training record for each Host, dependent on which team the Host is supported by.

Hosts will attend regular support groups or forums. Support groups provide an important forum for sharing information and are a vital part of Hosts’ ongoing development. Attendance at support groups is reviewed regularly and informs the Host(s) annual review. These support groups will be arranged and managed by the 18+ Accommodation Team for all Hosts including KCC In-House Staying Put Hosts.

## Prospective KSH Host Training (Pre-Panel Training)

All applicants who undergo assessment for the position of KSH Host are required to complete the ‘pre-panel’ training, to ensure that they have the basic skills around the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the role.

This can be delivered either in-person or virtually and will usually take place as part of a group of prospective Hosts, delivered jointly by a KSH Accommodation Officer and KSH Assessment Officer.

This aims to include a full discussion of the expectations of the role to ensure that all prospective Hosts have an adequate understanding of the involved rights and responsibilities and how quality support needs to be delivered to young people.

Subjects covered within this pre-panel training include:

* Professionalism
* Communicating with professionals
* Policies
* Recording requirements
* Experiences leading to Local Authority Care
* Referral and Matching Processes
* Trauma informed support and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
* De-escalation and Defusing Challenging Situations
* GDPR
* Health and Safety
* Accessing Support
* Training
* Equality and Diversity
* Kent’s Local Offer
* And more.

## KSH Host Core Training

The training below applies to all KSH Hosts within the service. The core training for Hosts has the expectation for three-yearly renewal.

Each other module is required to be completed only once, although remains available for update as frequently as desired / requested by the Host or Management.

The pre-panel eLearning course is hosted on our Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency partnership (KSCMP).

* PREVENT: Safeguarding People from Extremism and Terrorism
* Safeguarding & Child Protection
* Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
* Adult Safeguarding
* Safer Care.

## KSH Host Development Training Programme

This training is expected to be undertaken over the described period post-registration for Hosts, to ensure that they remain focussed on increasing their skills to support young people with a variety of vulnerabilities.

In the third year from the point of registration, the Hosts can nominate their own training for completion, based on their experiences over the previous two years, or the challenges they have faced with which they require greater knowledge, ability to affect change or confidence. Where there are areas for development identified by the Accommodation Officer, these can be shared with the Host and training requested to be completed to ensure that they are best prepared to provide positive, effective support to young people.

Hosts can access an online CPD resource via [The Education People](http://www.theeducationpeople.org) and bespoke training offers designed by KCC’s Training Coordinator in conjunction with expert facilitators independently or with the support of their Accommodation Officers, at any time.

As well as online and in-person training opportunities, Hosts will have access to support groups, delivered in person and online wherein they are able to meet with a facilitating Accommodation Officer and Hosts from across the service, to discuss themes, needs and successes in their roles of supporting young people. A schedule is devised yearly, offering at least four opportunities per quarter (three-month period running from January to December inclusive) to meet. This peer-led opportunity will enable the networking and self-improvement of Hosts, discussing those things which they feel are most important and valuable to them and encourage a community of Hosts to develop, where they are not limited by the support provided to them by the assigned Accommodation Officer, or by their geographical location.

In order that the Hosts do not simply focus on the time the young person spends with them, but are able also to support with the final transition of the young person from their accommodation to their next, independent accommodation, KCC 18+ Service have developed Tenancy Training (KCC) which covers topics such as what being a good tenant means, the rights and responsibilities of someone maintaining their own accommodation and includes a ‘Myth Busters’ section, with a focus on overcoming some problematic misconceptions which might adversely affect a young person’s transition towards, or sustainment of independent accommodation.

## Host Stages of Development

Year 1:

* First Aid
* Safe Care
* Understanding Trauma

Year 2:

* Managing Challenging Behaviour
* Mental Health Awareness
* Contextual Safeguarding

Year 3:

1. Host’s Chosen Course / Module – to be determined by the Host and with potential input from the Accommodation Officer supporting, if required/desired.
2. Host’s Chosen Course / Module – to be determined by the Host and with potential input from the Accommodation Officer supporting, if required/desired.

# Performance Management

## KSH Hosts

Kent Supported Homes Hosts have an established process by which they have their performance reviewed.

### Six Weekly Host Supervision

Utilised to discuss the current young people in the Host’s home and their support needs. During these discussions, there is consideration of what is working well, what needs to improve and how this might be achieved. This will include discussions on training which might need to be accessed to continue or improve support to move that young person towards their desired independence goals, what professionals might need to be involved in this support, beyond those routinely involved in this support and what other resources might be available within the local community or from other sources. Of course, the primary focus of all discussion around young people remains their wellbeing and any safeguarding issues which might present or might have already presented and how risks are able to be managed.

### Child in Care Reviews and Pathway Planning Meetings

Primarily focussed on the young people supported but have an aspect of outcome review and performance in achieving those discussed, on the part of the supporting professionals, including the Hosts. Hosts are expected to be invited to these reviews and to provide input, either in advance of the meeting or in-person during the meeting as requested. These take place upon the request of the young people, or at least every six months as per the legislative requirement. These meetings can be used for the purpose of overall placement review, but specific placement review meetings can be requested at any time by supporting professionals or the young people in situ with the Hosts.

### Host Annual Reviews

Have a shared consideration of all aspects of the Host’s role and performance in supporting young people. This includes but need not be limited to:

* Communication – with young people and professionals
* Compliance with employment requirements – Household DBSs
* Complaisance with accommodation safety and suitability requirements – health and safety, conditions, and access
* Host training completion and requests
* Support delivered to the young people in situ – successes and challenges.
* How successes might be amplified and proliferated in future support of young people
* How challenges faced might be overcome and improved upon in future support of young people
* Young person experiences (self-reported)
* Other relevant conceptual discussion for improvement of practice by Hosts.
* Respite and Holiday use
* The views of the Accommodation Officer
* Views of other supporting professionals as provided.

### Host Performance Requiring Improvement

If it is established that a Host or Hosts are not performing well or showing the characteristic traits which are required of someone in their specific position of responsibility, it may be decided that a specific action plan is required. This could consist of training, engagement with professionals for the purposes of learning and development, or other actions as deemed necessary by the Accommodation Officer and 18+ Accommodation Team Manager.

Once the required actions have been identified, a specific time period will need to be devised and, in this time, said actions completed. This will need to be shared in advance by the supporting professionals from KCC to the Host, for them to remain informed of what is to be achieved and by when. At the conclusion of this period, this will need to be reviewed by the Accommodation Officer and their recommendations provided to the 18+ Accommodation Team Manager. Should extenuating circumstances exist as to why this plan has not been completed in its entirety, then extension can be granted at the behest of the 18+ Accommodation Team Manager, pending further review. Once completed successfully in its entirety, the plan may cease.

Whereupon the plan is not completed successfully in its entirety, the Accommodation Officer should bring this to the attention of the Operations Manager, who will escalate this to the Head of Service for a joint decision on whether to put in further measures to manage the performance, or instead to terminate the employment of the Host via deregistration.

The outcome of any decision, to continue or cease use of the Host, must be shared with the Host.

If the Host wishes to appeal this, they may choose to do so within 28 days. At this point, the Head of Service will need to involve the Registered Service Manager as the final decision maker.

Records of all performance related processes and meetings, including supervisions and Annual Reviews will be kept electronically. Annual Reviews will be shared routinely with the Hosts and supervisions shared with Hosts upon request.

(See Statement of Purpose – Section 6 for further reference to Host Terminations)

## KCC Substantive Staff

### Monthly Supervisions

Each member of the substantive staff group within Kent Supported Homes will receive monthly supervision in line with the policies and procedures of the wider KCC staff group. This is to ensure that the users of our service get the best service possible, and that staff get the help and support they need to do their job effectively.

Supervision will be used to discuss responses/methods of work, professional competence, and knowledge with the aim of improving and developing practice, to be accountable for work undertaken, to examine and reflect on work/ practice, and to explore any issues or concerns. This includes time to express and understand feelings which arise in our work. It will also be utilised to plan personal skill development on an individual basis, including consideration of action plans and training.

Any issues with Hosts which the Accommodation Officers wish to raise to the attention of the Accommodation Team Manager can be done within this meeting, but of course, it remains the responsibility of the Accommodation Officer to raise these issues outside of the supervision framework where urgent or more immediate actions are required or specific consideration to safeguarding is present. Safeguarding the wellbeing of the young people supported by KCC remains every employee’s main priority and the relevant manager or service manager within the relevant child or young person social work team should be notified of any concerns as soon as they are identified.

During supervision, various tools available to the supervising manager may be utilised, including:

* Supervision guidance for managers available through the KCC intranet resource ‘KNet’
* Wellbeing tools available via ‘KNet’
* The data reporting tool ‘Power BI,’ which provides data in relation to compliance to supervision and review of Hosts by the Accommodation Officers
* Other tools as identified as useful and relevant to the continuing professional development of the supervisee.

### KSH Quarterly KPI Review Meetings

Held each three-month period, these meetings focus on key areas of service delivery. These can vary in their focus as the progress and development of the service remains dynamic, but tend to include, but not be limited to considering the following:

* Dip-sampling of case recording by Accommodation Officers
* Dip-sampling of Host Monthly Reports
* Consideration of any complaints received from Hosts or young people.
* Recruitment and capacity: Staff and Hosts
* Understanding placement disruption
* Planned moves vs unplanned moves data
* Average length of young person’s stay data
* Hosts assessment data
* Number of supported young people currently at university
* Training consideration
* Safeguarding
* Enhanced and Complex payment rate reviews
* Other themes and topics as required

The aspect of case recording by Accommodation Officers allows oversight of the performance in this regard and consideration of any complaints received from Hosts and young people, ensures that if there are staff issues affecting the happiness of the Hosts and young people within the service that these are given due consideration and can be raised within supervision of the individual who is subject of the complaint.

### Annual Performance Reviews (TCPs)

The ‘Total Contribution Pay’ process is utilised by KCC to review the performance and achievement of its staff on an annual basis, ensuring that where there is good practice, this is evidenced and rewarded and where there is need for performance improvement, that this can be identified and put into practice for the support and development of the worker and the service they deliver.

### Substantive Staff Performance Requiring Improvement

Any staff member who receives a ‘Performance Requires Improvement’ grading, will have at least an informal action plan devised for them, with their involvement, so that they have specific goals to achieve regarding meeting the requirements of their role. This can be reviewed in specific planned meetings with their manager, or within their wider supervision framework, as decided upon by both parties. These plans will require application of SMART goal setting to ensure satisfactory progress.

Where performance is seen to improve, these can be continued for a period to ensure ongoing performance or removed.

Where performance is seen not to improve, an extension or escalation of this might be required, using the formal HR processes in place within KCC to manage the progression of these plans, with the involvement of formal HR procedures.

Where the staff member cannot evidence sufficient improvement, KCC HR processes relating to the termination of employees will need to be progressed.

Requirements for action plans to address performance issues need not only be identified within the TCP process, but at any time, based on the evidence of the practice by the staff member as understood by the operations or other manager within KSH.

# Contingency Planning

## Host Contingency

Relief Hosts are in place for some Hosts where identified and might be accessible upon request for those without such individuals already identified. Should a Host with an identified Relief Host need to take respite away from the home for any reason, or require to be away from the home for a period due to health and wellbeing issues, said Relief Hosts can be utilised to take their place in the main Host’s Home for the required period and take all necessary actions in-lieu of the main Host, avoiding any disruption to the placement of the young person/people supported.

Should no such Relief Host be available, a Respite Host in another address can be identified if required for a reasonable fixed period. The young person would be supported in this instance, to relocate to the Respite Host’s address for that period until they are able to return and plans will be put into place by the relevant supporting Social Work team as to how to support the young person to continue to work on any educational, employment or other goals as required.

Where there is no determined end date for the main Host who must leave their address for any period, a long-term move of the young person, following usual matching processes will be undertaken.

Should no alternative Hosts be available which meet the needs of the young person, it will be a management decision, within the relevant team supporting the young person, as to which other form of accommodation best suits their needs and how this will be accessed.

## Substantive Staff Contingency

Where there are substantive KCC staff absences, in the short-term, another member or other members of the team will cover their responsibilities to their Hosts where reasonable and practicable. The KSH team remains embedded within the wider KCC 18+ Service and as such, they can benefit from the same ‘duty team‘ processes and staff support as for all others across the service. Advice will also be provided to Hosts as to which other resources or professionals might be accessed to access the support required by them, during this time.

Where there are long term absences, consideration as to how to manage this sufficiently will be undertaken by the senior management and decisions made in respect of ensuring that the absences do not impact on service delivery and quality.

# Staff Wellbeing and Support

KCC and Kent Supported Homes recognise that the work undertaken by its cohorts of staff, both substantive and in hosting young people, can raise issues and deliver experiences to them which might impact on their emotional wellbeing. It aims to build resilience in staff as well as to support them when they are not at their most resilient.

Substantive staff can access a vast array of resources within ‘KNet’ to support them in building resilience and accessing support when they feel they might require it.

Specific spoken therapy sessions are available through KNet, from a commissioned service, for access by any substantive staff at any time. They can access this with or without informing their manager as they wish, although the Accommodation Team Manager or other managers within the service are always ready and willing to offer any guidance for which they are qualified, to their staff.

General consideration of staff wellbeing is discussed in each supervision, provided the supervisee is willing. During this time, they can disclose any issues which they feel they might benefit from disclosing and should this be something which the manager does not feel able to offer adequate or safe support to in the context of their role as supervisor, they will advise the supervisee to contact a relevant professional or member of their support network for further support, making note of this in their supervision.

Team Meetings are held for all members of the 18+ Accommodation Team on a 4 – 6 weekly basis and wellbeing discussions also form part of this forum, to ensure that the team feel that they can hold non-confidential wellbeing discussions with the wider team, to build a sense of community and ‘safety’ in sharing with their colleagues.

Hosts will have discussion around their own wellbeing in their supervision session with their Accommodation Officers and are able to raise issues which might be affecting them in this forum. Hosts should see the Accommodation Officers in the role of ‘appreciative professionals’ in this regard, not specialist supports for wellbeing or mental health. Should either the Host or Accommodation Officers identify any additional needs of the Host in regard to their own wellbeing and resilience, resources available via KCC such as training should be explored, but where these are not sufficient to address them as is required, the Host must engage with relevant specialists outside of their supervision.

At any time, should the Accommodation Officer or Host feel that in the best interests of Host, a ‘pause’ from supporting young people be required, then actions will be taken as soon as possible to either provide respite to the Host and any young person placed with them, or place the Host on ‘hold’ for future referrals, pending improvement, should they not have any young people receiving support from them at that time.

# Budget and Resources

As an in-house local authority delivered service, all funding of Kent Supported Homes and all aspects of it including staffing costs, training expenses, is drawn from the wider KCC whole service budgets, which will ensure its continued provision. The service is a permanent part of the staffing structure of the KCC service and is not subject to any required review of fixed-term funding. Adequate provision of funds for the service will be provided to it whilst it is in operation.

Should funding of the service be withdrawn by the local authority, this will be done with considerable planning for the transitions of any young people in situ and the work force and other relevant local authority documents, strategies or policies will be updated to reflect this planning and how it will be achieved without adverse effects on the support of the young people.

# Communication and Engagement

Hosts hold discussions with their Accommodation Officers in the previously mentioned fora, in which they can share their views and experiences in relation to the function of the service, including any areas covered within the workforce plan, which can in-turn be fed back to the management of the service for consideration in the context of making positive changes to it.

Hosts are provided with exit interview questionnaires which they can choose to complete upon their exit from the service and share views about their experiences, which can be utilised to shape future service development.

Substantive staff have the chance to discuss their views and feelings on the workforce planning within the service both in their regular supervisions with their manager, and in regular team meetings. This provides them with opportunities both shared and confidential to discuss staff capacity, strengths of the service and feedback on the processes and performance as they understand it.

# Review and Update

The workforce plan for Kent Supported Homes will be scheduled for update in 6 monthly intervals. With both service needs and development needs being dynamic, this will itself be subject to review and flexibility within its planning.

Where there are changing needs, regulations, and identified best practices requiring review of this document and service delivery and operations, scheduled review periods may be altered to meet this requirement.

The aforementioned KSH Quarterly KPI Review Meetings will be ongoing and used as a main component of identifying any specific needs for review in these areas.

# Appendix A – Kent Supported Homes Structure Chart

**18+ Service Fostering Sevice**

**Registered Manager**

Caroline Smith

**Head of Fostering (West)**

Mark Vening

**18+ Head of Service**

Mark Weinel

**Recruitment and Assessment Team Manager**

Angela Cornwell

**18+ Accommodation Team Manager**

Sebastian Blythe

**18+ Accommodation Finance Officer**

Diane Holmes

**Training Coordinator**

**Sue Douglas**

**Recruitment Coordinator**

**Abi Cummings**

**Assessment**

**Officer**

Amanda Hutson

**Assessment**

**Officer**

Kerry Baines

**Accommodation**

**Officer (S/E)**

Danielle Witherington

**Accommodation**

**Officer (S/E)**

Marie Parker

**Accommodation**

**Officer (N/W)**

Ben Marshall

**Accommodation**

**Officer (N/W)**

Temi Awe

**Hosts**